

News Release

NEW STATE VETERANS CEMETERY ONE STEP CLOSER TO COMPLETION

SACRAMENTO, CA – January 23, 2003 – Secretary of Veterans Affairs K. Maurice Johannessen today announced that work on the \$7 million Northern California State Veterans Cemetery, near Redding, is progressing on target.

Work crews have begun clearing brush and unwanted trees from the site as the landscape architectural firm of Royston, Hanamoto, Alley, and Abey of Mill Valley, California, complete the Working Drawing Phase of the project. Work crews are expected to have the site clear by the end of February. Meanwhile, the working drawings should be complete in early February and ready for review through the month of March. The cemetery construction is being funded entirely by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).

“I am pleased that progress on the Northern California State Veterans Cemetery is moving along so well,” commented Johannessen. “When completed, this will be the first state run veterans cemetery open to all eligible California Veterans. It will provide a place where they can be interred with the proper dignity afforded to them for having given so much for our country,” the Secretary added.

Construction is set to begin December of this year. The Northern California State Veterans Cemetery will be located in Shasta County, near the community of Igo, approximately ten miles southwest of the City of Redding. It consists of 120 acres, 61 of which are slated for development. Included in the plans for the cemetery are an administration/visitor center, committal service shelters, burial grounds and columbarium, an assembly/flag area for special events, a memorial section, and a maintenance area.

When completed in December 2004, the Northern California State Veterans Cemetery will offer veterans and their eligible spouses and dependents five types of burials. These will include traditional in-ground, pre-cast vault, in-ground cremated remains, columbarium crypt, and a scatter garden also for cremated remains. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) will pay for interment costs for eligible veterans, inclusive of headstones, but all other costs associated with burials, such as funeral expenses, will be the responsibility of the veteran or veteran's family. Funeral homes will be able to assist with these arrangements. For a complete description of burial benefits offered to veterans, please refer to the USDVA website at www.cem.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000.

The Northern California State Veterans Cemetery will be the first veteran's cemetery in the Golden State open to all eligible state veterans.